



McGREGOR W. SCOTT

*United States Attorney
Eastern District of California*

NEWS RELEASE

Sacramento
501 I Street, Suite 10-100
Sacramento, CA 95814
Tel 916/554-2700
TTY 916/554-2877

Fresno
2500 Tulare St., Suite 4401
Fresno, CA 93721
Tel (559) 497-4000
TTY (559) 497-4500

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 21, 2007

Contact: Rosemary Shaul (916) 554-2802
<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/cae>

FEDERAL AND STATE AGENTS TARGET INDIVIDUALS WHO DEFRAUDED THE CALIFORNIA EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT OF UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE BENEFITS

FRESNO - United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that three defendants in two separate cases were indicted yesterday by a federal grand jury for defrauding the California Employment Development Department (EDD) of unemployment insurance benefits. Named in the first indictment were MARIO JURADO PENA, 37, and his wife, JACQUELINE CHAVEZ JURADO, 32, of Sanger, with conspiracy, mail fraud, identity theft and conspiracy to commit money laundering. In the second indictment, CRUZ MENDOZA, a.k.a. Carlos Espindola, 40, of Dinuba, was indicted for mail fraud, identity theft and criminal forfeiture.

These cases were a product of an extensive investigation by the United States Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General and the California Employment Development Department with assistance from the United States Postal Inspection Service.

According to Assistant United States Attorneys Stanley A. Boone and Sheila K. Oberto, who are prosecuting the cases, the first indictment charges defendants JURADO PENA and JURADO with defrauding the Employment Development Department (EDD) by filing thousands of false unemployment insurance claims with the EDD from the period of January 2001 to April 2003 in claims totaling close to

\$3 million. According to the indictment, the defendants fraudulently acquired thousands of employees' identities, which included names and social security numbers. Using that fraudulently acquired information, the defendants then filed false claims with the EDD and had the fraudulent unemployment checks sent to numerous post office boxes and other addresses that they controlled. Defendant MENDOZA is charged with similar conduct but from the period of January 2000 to August 2007 for claims totaling over \$500,000. In a search warrant executed at defendant MENDOZA's residence on December 7, 2007, federal and state agents seized \$219,690 in cash.

Each defendant faces a maximum of 20 years. However, the actual sentence will be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables, and any applicable statutory sentencing factors.

The charges are only allegations and the defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

###